

# ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

## MEDICAL OFFICERS OF HEALTH

FOR THE YEAR

### 1945.

#### STATISTICS AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS OF THE AREA.

Area	26,881 acres
Population	9,730
Number of inhabited houses	2,634
Rateable Value (1st April, 1945)	£60,860
Sum represented by a Penny Rate	£259
	1945/46

Although on first seeing this district would appear to be entirely rural and therefore it might be concluded our villages would depend entirely on agriculture, the close proximity of several small industrial towns has had effect on the population. Also, as a result of the war, several villages have had influxes of industrial workers, some of whom are still resident in the new houses provided for them.

Population.			
Atworth	780	Agriculture	One new industry
Broughton Gifford	700	Mainly Agriculture	
Hilperton	830	Agriculture	
Holt	1,140	Agriculture	Tanyard and Leather Factory
			Mattress Factory
Limpley Stoke	530	Agriculture	Residential
Melksham Without	2,050	Mainly Agriculture	
Monkton Farleigh	380	Agriculture	Large Government works
Semington	430	Mainly Agriculture	
South Wraxall	440	Mainly Agriculture	
Staverton	260	Agriculture	Large " Milk " factory
Westwood	940	Agriculture	Industrial transferred war industry
Wingfield	280	Agriculture	
Winsley	970	Agriculture	Residential

#### VITAL STATISTICS.

Births		M.	F.	Total	
Live Births —	Legitimate	...	95	65	160
	Illegitimate	...	10	13	23
			105	78	183
Still Births—	Legitimate	...	4	2	6
	Illegitimate	...	0	1	1
			4	3	7

<b>Birth Rate</b>	<b>Rural District</b>		<b>England and Wales</b>
Per 1000 population	18.8		16.1
<b>Still-birth Rate</b>			
Per 1000 population	00.71		00.46
<b>Deaths</b>	<b>M.</b>	<b>F.</b>	<b>Total</b>
Deaths from all causes	60	65	125
	—	—	—
Deaths of Infants under 1 year :			
Legitimate	4	3	7
Illegitimate	1	0	1
	—	—	—
	5	3	8
	—	—	—
Deaths of Infants under 2 years from Diarrhoea and Enteritis	0	0	0
<b>Death Rate</b>	<b>Rural District</b>		<b>England and Wales</b>
Per 1000 population	12.7		13.5
Infants under 1 year per 1000 live births	48.00		46.00
Infants under 2 years from Diarrhoea and Enteritis per 1000 live births	0		5.6

#### Analysis of deaths from all causes.

	Male	Female	Total
Whooping Cough	0	1	1
Tuberculosis of respiratory system	1	1	2
Other forms of Tuberculosis	1	0	1
Cancer of Stomach and duodenum	4	1	5
Cancer of Breast	0	5	5
Cancer of all other sites	4	7	11
Diabetes	0	1	1
Intracranial vascular lesions	6	10	16
Heart Disease	21	16	37
Other diseases of circulatory system	0	1	1
Bronchitis	4	1	5
Pneumonia	2	0	2
Other respiratory diseases	0	2	2
Appendicitis	1	0	1
Other digestive diseases	0	3	3
Nephritis	3	3	6
Maternal causes other than puerperal			
and post-abortion sepsis	0	1	1
Premature Birth	1	1	2
Congenital malformation ; Birth			
Injuries and infantile diseases	2	3	5
Road traffic accidents	1	1	2
Other violent causes	3	—	3
All other causes	6	7	13
	—	—	—
	60	65	125
	—	—	—

Note : By far the largest "cause of death" it will be seen, is from "heart disease," It must be realised that nearly all the deaths from this cause occur in the very old age groups and it is not to be taken as evidence of rheumatic or other acute heart affections.

### GENERAL PROVISION OF HEALTH SERVICES IN THE AREA.

- I(a) One part-time Medical Officer who is a full-time Public Health Officer acting also for the Bradford-on-Avon U.D., the Trowbridge U.D., and being in addition an Assistant County Medical Officer : One part-time M.O. General Practitioner.
- (b) One whole-time Sanitary Inspector.
- II(a) **Laboratory facilities :** No change. The County Pathologist, Salisbury General Infirmary, undertakes all routine examination of swabs, blood and sputum specimens and water samples for bacteriological and chemical analyses.
- (b) **Ambulance facilities :**
1. Melksham portion of area—Melksham Hospital ambulance.
  2. Bradford-on-Avon portion of area—St. John's ambulance ; Bradford-on-Avon Ambulance.
  3. Trowbridge, Bradford-on-Avon and Melksham Town ambulances, and Red Cross and St. John ambulance and Hospital Car service (Local Organiser, Miss Bond, Court House, Trowbridge).
  4. Bath portion of area—Ambulances from Bath as required ; and the Car Pool Service operating through the County Council.
- (c) **Nursing in the Home :** The villages are covered by the Wilts Nursing Association ; most of the nurses have more than one village to attend.
- (d) **Treatment Centres and Clinics.** The Child Welfare Clinics in each of Trowbridge, Bradford-on-Avon and Melksham receive children from the neighbouring districts. Westwood village has a Weighing Clinic taken by the County Health Visitor for the district.
- (e) **Hospital Accommodation and Maternity Homes :**
1. Melksham and District Hospital.
  2. Trowbridge and District Hospital, with Maternity Block.
  3. Proposed Hospital in Bradford-on-Avon (to be opened in 1946).
  4. Bath Royal United and St. Martin's Hospitals ; Mineral Water Hospital.

#### Infectious Diseases Hospital :

Bradley Road, Trowbridge.

This hospital, originally intended for Trowbridge, Bradford-on-Avon, Melksham and the neighbouring rural districts, has for the the last few years also had to admit cases for the Westbury-Warminster area due to the closing of the Warminster Isolation Hospital for lack of staff.

### SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE AREA.

#### 1. WATER.

As the conditions vary so greatly in different parts of the district it will be necessary to deal with them separately.

##### Westwood-Wingfield.

A large reservoir was built by the Ministry of Works and this has enabled the new industrial population to receive a reasonable supply. The water is chlorinated at the pumping works at Avoncliff by the Chloramine method increased as and when necessary. It is mixed in the long rising main to the reservoir. The analyses taken proved entirely satisfactory. Typical ones shown are (a) from well before treatment—and (b) from the reservoir after treatment—taken on same day.

### Report on Bacteriological Examination of Water.

Water sample received on 7-12-44 at 9.30 from well, Avoncliff.

#### 1. Bacteriological Count.

Total colonies growing on agar at 37°C in 48 hours : 25 per 1 ml. of water.

#### 2. B. Coli Counts at 37°C in 48 hours and 44°C in 48 hours.

Quantity of Water Tested	Acid and Gas from lactose									
	at 37°C					at 44°C				
Five tubes of 10 ml. water	+	+	+	+	+	+	—	—	—	—
Five tubes of 1 ml. water	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

As result of calculation made from above :

(1) Number of Coli Aerogenes per 100 ml. at 37°C ... 25

(2) Number of Faecal types of B. Coli per 100 ml. growing at 44°C ... 3

#### OPINION :—

Bacteriological examination shows appreciable pollution with surface soil bacterial types, of which only minimal numbers are typical faecal coliforms.

E. M. Darmady,  
Pathologist.

9.12.44.

### Report on Bacteriological Examination of Water.

Water sample received on 7-12-44 at 9.30 from tap by reservoir.

#### 1. Bacteriological Count.

Total colonies growing on agar at 37°C in 48 hours : 10 per 1 ml. of water.

#### 2. B. Coli Counts at 37°C in 48 hours and 44°C in 48 hours.

Quantity of Water Tested	Acid and Gas from lactose									
	at 37°C					at 44°C				
Five tubes of 10 ml. water	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Five tubes of 1 ml. water	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

As result of calculation made from above :

(1) Number of Coli Aerogenes per 100 ml. growing at 37°C ... Nil

(2) Number of Faecal types of B. Coli per 100 ml. growing at 44°C ... Nil

#### OPINION :—

Bacteriological examination shows no evidences whatsoever of harmful pollution.

9.12.44.

E. M. Darmady,  
Pathologist.



**Winsley and Limpley Stoke.** Supplied by the Combe Down Waterworks Company—satisfactory.

**Monkton Farleigh.** The original village supply—very short at times, has been augmented by the overflow from a neighbouring establishment.

**Holt.** There is a local water company here which gives a supply satisfactory in quantity and excellent in quality on each analysis.

**Broughton Gifford.** A local supply—no actual complaints of shortage have been received.

**Nerrington Common.** Supplied by overflow from artesian bore: the water is of excellent quality but the tank has given some trouble. This has since been removed and the supply is now direct from the borehole.

**Staverton, Hilperton and Semington.** Supplied by the Trowbridge, Melksham and District Water Board. Satisfactory in quantity and quality. An analysis is given:

**Bacteriological.** 8th Oct., 1945.

	<b>Hilperton Reservoir</b>	<b>Semington Rd., Melksham</b>
Free Chlorine on arrival	0.16 pm.	absent
Colonies on Agar @ 20°C	5	3
ditto @ 37°C	3	less than 1
Organisms of the		
Coli-aerogens Group	absent from 100ml.	absent from 100ml.

**South Wraxall.** This unfortunate village has had serious shortages for many years in spite of efforts by the owner of the original supply and the Council to keep it sufficient in quantity. The condition was aggravated by the presence in a house in each of the upper and lower villages of large establishments evacuated from danger areas.

During the year the cartage of water was carried out by the National Fire Service.

**Atwerth.** A further example of the inadequacy of a local supply. This village has a "supply" that has been installed for many years, and apart from the greatly increased consumption necessary for decent modern living, it was found that as the pipes were rusted, a certain amount of water was being lost before any good could be obtained from it. As a result the village suffered from very frequent shortages, one of the worst features being the time that had to be spent waiting for a bucket to be filled. Several attempts were made by the Council to provide a larger supply, and one plan had been submitted for approval to the Ministry and work almost started when a much better opportunity was afforded to give a supply from outside the Council's district.

**Shaw and Whitley and Part of Melksham Without.** Supplied by the Trowbridge, Melksham and District Water Board. As this part of the district lies beyond the town of Melksham and is at the very end of the Water Board's Area, it has been extremely short of water on many occasions.

**Beanacre.** This village drew most of its supply from wells in private possession; 85% of the wells (involving over 100 houses) were proved to be totally unfit for human consumption, and on representation made by this Council the Trowbridge, Melksham and District Water Board are extending their mains towards this village.

#### **Report of Bacteriological Examination of Water (from a well at Beanacre).**

##### **1. Bacteriological Count.**

Total colonies growing on agar at 37°C in 48 hours: 160 per 1 ml. of water.

##### **2. B. Coli Counts at 37°C in 48 hours and 44°C in 48 hours.**

Quantity of Water Tested	Acid and Gas from lactose									
	at 37°C					at 44°C				
Five tubes of 10 ml. water	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Five tubes of 1 ml. water	+	+	+	+	+	+	—	—	—	—

As a result of calculation made from above :

- (1) Number of Coli Aerogenes per 100 ml. growing at 37°C ... 180+  
 (2) Number of Faecal types of B. Coli per 100 ml. growing at 44°C ... 35

OPINION :—

Bacteriological examination shows a gross pollution of surface origin, including faecal coliforms in considerable numbers.

E. M. Darmady,  
Pathologist.

3.9.45.

**New proposal for South Wraxall, Atworth, Shaw and Whitley, Beanacre and Melksham Without.**

A neighbouring authority, Chippenham Town Council, owns a very large supply which during the war enabled very large camps and other government establishments to be formed and carried on successfully.

It appeared possible that certain Government Works might be closing down and a surplus be available at a point close to the Council's north boundary. This surplus would be sufficient for all the above villages.

The proposal is that a trunk main be laid from the nearest point outside the Council's boundary to Atworth ; that a small main be laid to South Wraxall, and the main be continued, supplying all Atworth needs to the village boundary. At that point the Trowbridge, Melksham and District Water Board (who will contribute to the cost of the large trunk main) will take over and will supply the above-mentioned villages and the north side of Melksham Town.

It is hoped that this new proposal will be carried through as quickly as possible.

#### Infectious Diseases.

Notifications received and Cases arranged into age groups.

Age Group	Scarlet Fever		Whooping Cough		Measles		Diphtheria		Acute Polio-Myelitis	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
1	1	1	4	0	16	17	0	0	0	0
3	1	4	2	1	12	12	0	0	0	0
5	6	9	2	2	41	29	0	1	1	1
10	0	3	0	1	13	17	0	0	0	0
15	0	3	0	0	2	4	0	0	0	0
25 and over	0	2	0	0	1	4	0	0	0	0
Age unknown	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total ...	8	22	9	4	86	83	0	1	1	1

Age Group	Pneumonia		Erysipelas	
	M	F	M	F
0	0	0	0	0
5	0	2	0	0
15	0	2	0	1
45	0	0	0	1
65 and over	0	0	0	0
Age unknown	0	0	0	0
Total ..	0	4	0	2

**Puerperal Pyrexia — 1 Case.**

**Scarlet Fever.** All the cases were of a mild variety, and owing to pressure on the Isolation Hospital beds, many of these, where there were no complications, either of the disease or of living conditions, were nursed at home.

**Measles.** This outbreak started early in the year, most cases occurring in the second and third quarter; it finished almost dramatically by September, no cases being notified in the last quarter. Very few cases developed any complications.

**Diphtheria.** Immunisation was carried out continuously by the County Council, great assistance being given by the school staffs, who assisted greatly by allowing the under school-age children to attend the sessions held at the schools.

We are grateful to the County Medical Officer for supplying the following details.

**IMMUNISATION IN RELATION TO CHILD POPULATION.**

Number of children who have completed a full course of immunisation at any time up to 31st December, 1945.

Age at 31st December, 1945	Under 1	1	2	3	4	5 to 9	10 to 14	Total under 15
<i>i.e.</i> , born in year ...	1945	1944	1943	1942	1941	1936-40	1931-5	
Number Immunised ...	—	44	90	69	87	472	509	1271
Estimated Mid-Year Population 1945 ...		764				1420		2184

The success of this scheme will be realised when the table of cases is studied. The one case occurred in a non-immunised child.

We should like to make one point clear—many fathers are under the impression that the immunisation of young children affects them in a similar way to the combined inoculations carried out in the Army. As an extreme case, may we quote one reaction.

The mother speaks: "Yes nurse, their father says the three girls can be done but not the boy—he doesn't want the boy hurt."



It was pointed out by a scandalised Health Visitor that the boy would be much more hurt if he developed diphtheria, but the father proved immovable.

It must be pointed out again that young children have no or very slight reaction : so that all fathers may rest assured that their anxiety towards the children suffering pain as a result is unfounded.

Immunisation sessions are carried out regularly at :—

Trowbridge Child Welfare Clinic	Every Fourth Thursday	Dr. Reynolds
Bradford-on-Avon Child Welfare Clinic	Every First Tuesday 2—3 p.m.	Dr. J. Murray

Dr. Reynolds visits the schools in the villages as required.

## HOUSING.

This district is, as all the rest of the County, suffering from shortage of houses, with resultant overcrowding. Many of our houses, some of them very old, are suffering from lack of repair rendering living conditions still more hard. The Council have acted as promptly as they are allowed in providing sites for temporary and permanent housing. They have also requisitioned houses, and are preparing to continue so doing.

**Temporary.** Plans, with necessary sections of drainage, etc., were prepared and approved during the last summer in respect of a site in the parish of Holt, for 20 temporary prefabricated houses, and arrangements entered into with the Ministry of Works to complete all site preparation on behalf of the Council. At the end of the year such work was in actual progress, but no intimation was in hand as to when delivery of the actual buildings could be expected.

**Permanent.** The Council have had prolonged negotiations to acquire sites in various of their parishes, all for development and erection of permanent dwellings. Plans of such dwellings have also been submitted to the Ministry, and after many delays, final approval was obtained, but the Council desired to take full advantage of the move to provide houses of somewhat larger accommodation and therefore plans as prepared are now being re-drawn to such larger sizes. Layouts in respect of sites in three parishes were submitted to the Ministry and authorisation to obtain tenders in respect of one site was granted in November, 1945.

**Requisitioned and Officially Rented Properties.** Empty properties, where such steps were possible, have been requisitioned for occupation by homeless and inadequately housed families and the utmost use has been made of these houses and cottages.

The actual position as at December 31st, 1945, was as follows :—

Number of Houses	12
Number of Families Housed	13
Number of Persons Housed	56

The latter figure includes 10 homeless persons from Evacuation Areas who are still unable to return home through lack of accommodation in their home areas.

All possible steps were taken to put these properties in a habitable state of repair, and the respective tenants are happy and comfortable in the knowledge that the Council has done its best to meet their urgent needs as far as it has been practicable.

**Housing Survey.** A complete survey of the housing of the district is being carried out by the Sanitary Inspector. As there are about 2,000 inhabited houses in the area, and he is working single-handed, progress is being made slowly but steadily. It is quite obvious that many of our older houses require drastic alterations before fulfilling the requirements of the Housing Acts. It is hoped that next year's Annual Report will furnish the details of this survey.

JEAN MURRAY, M.B., Ch.B. D.P.H.

D. LEIGH SPENCE, M.A., M.B.

Medical Officers of Health.

October, 1946.